

Case 3377

***Ataenius* Harold, 1867 (Insecta, Coleoptera): proposed precedence over *Aphodinus* Motschulsky, 1862**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Articles 23.9.3 and 81.2.3 of the Code, is to conserve the generic name *Ataenius* Harold, 1867 for a world-wide and well-known genus of scarab beetles (family SCARABAEIDAE) by giving it precedence over the older name *Aphodinus* Motschulsky, 1862. Prior to 2001, the name *Aphodinus* was largely ignored, although it was used by Schmidt in three of his publications (1913, 1914, 1922) for a subgenus of *Aphodius* Illiger, 1798. In 2001, Dellacasa, Bordat & Dellacasa placed *Ataenius* in synonymy with *Aphodinus*. *Ataenius* is a genus with a nearly world-wide distribution and approximately 300 described species. Replacement of the name *Ataenius* by *Aphodinus* would seriously affect the stability of the group.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Coleoptera; SCARABAEIDAE; *Ataenius*; *Aphodinus*; *Ataenius scutellaris*; *Aphodinus castanicolor*; scarab beetles; world-wide.

1. Motschulsky (1862, p. 55) established the genus *Aphodinus* by listing under that name three previously described species: *Aphodius castanicolor* Motschulsky, 1858, *Aphodius cancelliventris* Motschulsky, 1858 and *Aphodius compacticollis* Motschulsky, 1858. *Aphodinus* was listed again by Motschulsky in 1869 (p. 63), with the same three species included.

2. *Aphodinus* was not mentioned subsequently until Schmidt (1913, 1914, 1922) used it for a subgenus of *Aphodius* and included in it the three species originally listed by Motschulsky.

3. Kozhantschikov (1916, p. 192) studied the types of both *Aphodius castanicolor* and *Aphodius cancelliventris* and put both names as junior synonyms of *Aphodius australasiae* Boheman, 1858 (p. 50), the type species of *Pseudammoecius* Schmidt, 1913 (p. 160). This synonymy was confirmed by Stebnicka & Howden (1997, p. 761)

4. Apart from being listed by Neave (1939, p. 248) in his 'Nomenclator', *Aphodinus* was not mentioned until Dellacasa (1988, p. 231) reintroduced the name and considered it a possible senior synonym of *Pseudammoecius* Schmidt, 1913. Thus the status of *Aphodinus* has remained uncertain, partly because of the absence of a

designated type species and partly because it has been overlooked or been considered unavailable.

5. Stebnicka (1990, p. 898) transferred *Aphodius australasiae* Boheman, 1858 to the genus *Ataenius* Harold, 1867 and by doing so synonymized *Pseudammoecius* Schmidt, 1913 with *Ataenius*.

6. The type species of *Ataenius* by subsequent designation by Cartwright (1974, p. 1) is *Ataenius scutellaris* Harold, 1867.

7. Dellacasa, Bordat & Dellacasa (2001, p. 36) designated *Aphodius castanicolor* as the types species of *Aphodinus* and consequently effectively listed *Ataenius* as its junior synonym.

8. The statement of synonymy by Dellacasa, Bordat & Dellacasa (2001) has apparently been overlooked, as at least nine papers have been published subsequently using the name *Ataenius*, with no mention of *Aphodinus*. Although *Aphodinus* is an older name and has priority over *Ataenius*, the latter, with around 300 described species, has a long history of use in over a hundred references (see Nakane, 1960; Balthasar, 1964; Cartwright, 1964, 1974; Petrovitz, 1964; Arnett, 1968; Woodruff, 1973; Cartwright & Chalumeau, 1978; Watt, 1984; Baraud, 1985; Dellacasa, 1988; Stebnicka, 1990; Downie & Arnett, 1996; Stebnicka & Howden, 1997; Skelley & Gordon, 2002). *Aphodinus*, on the other hand, was used only sporadically and inconsistently.

9. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to give the name *Ataenius* Harold, 1867 precedence over the name *Aphodinus* Motschulsky, 1862, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *Ataenius* Harold, 1867 (gender: masculine), type species by subsequent designation by Cartwright (1974) *Ataenius scutellaris* Harold, 1867, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name *Aphodinus* Motschulsky, 1862 whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
 - (b) *Aphodinus* Motschulsky, 1862 (gender: masculine), type species by subsequent designation by Dellacasa, Bordat & Dellacasa (2001) *Aphodius castanicolor* Motschulsky, 1858, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the name *Ataenius* Harold, 1867 whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *scutellaris* Harold, 1867, as published in the binomen *Ataenius scutellaris* (specific name of the type species of *Ataenius* Harold, 1867);
 - (b) *castanicolor* Motschulsky, 1858, as published in the binomen *Aphodius castanicolor* (specific name of the type species of *Aphodinus* Motschulsky, 1862).

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